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**MEDIA ADVISORY
For Immediate Release**

Congregation Beth Am, East Palo Alto Kids Foundation & Jewish Coalition for Literacy to Celebrate 2nd Year of Costaño Elementary Reading Project with Students & Parents

*Hoopoe Books Director to Read to Students Who will Receive
Personal Bookcases & Books from Community Organizations to Take Home*

To help avert the loss over the summer of academic gains achieved during the school year, second grade students at Costaño Elementary School in East Palo Alto are getting a little help from their friends: On Wednesday, May 27 each child will be presented with a bookcase filled with age-appropriate summer reading to take home, courtesy of three community organizations.

To jump-start the celebration of summer reading, author Sally Mallam, Director of Hoopoe Books Share Literacy Program, will read to the students from *Dende Maro: The Golden Prince*, her recently published children's book inspired by the ancient rock art of Africa. Hoopoe Books donated 40 copies of *Dende Maro* to the Costaño students.

Joan Green, Reading Specialist with the Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL) will conduct a literacy training session for the parents of the children receiving bookcases. The program will be conducted in English and Spanish and will give parents the opportunity to learn and practice reading techniques to bolster their children's language development.

With a majority of students from poor and low-income immigrant families, Costaño has many parents who are not fluent in English, do not have books at home, and are unable to encourage the love of reading so strongly correlated with later success in school and life.

Congregation Beth Am, East Palo Alto Kids Foundation, and the JCL have supported reading at Costaño for the last two years and collaborated to develop the give-away program they hope will keep kids reading over the summer and throughout their lifetimes.

(The media is invited to cover the May 27 event. Details are below.)

WHAT: Second grade students at Costaño Elementary School in East Palo Alto will each receive a new bookcase and a supply of purchased and donated books from Peninsula communities to take home. Now in its second year, this activity is a continuation of the Costaño School Reading Project



sponsored by the East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK), Congregation Beth Am of Los Altos Hills and the Jewish Coalition for Literacy (JCL). The bookcases and over 1,000 books were assembled by volunteers from EPAK, Congregation Beth Am, the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center and Costañó students.

Sally Mallam, Director of Hoopoe Books Share Literacy Program, will read to the students from *Dende Maro: The Golden Prince*, her recently published children's picturebook inspired by the ancient rock art of Africa. --more--

Hoopoe Books donated 40 copies of *Dende Maro* to the children. Linden Tree Children's Recordings and Books in Los Altos provided a significant discount on purchases of other books that they provided for the bookcases.

WHEN: 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 27th

WHERE: Costañó Elementary School, 2695 Fordham Street, East Palo Alto

WHO: 40 2nd Grade Costañó students

WHY: Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander students are the largest ethnic groups at Costañó. The majority of students are from poor and low income immigrant families and many have parents who are not fluent in English or lack sufficient literacy skills, either in English or in their native languages. Consequently, many families do not have a home library to encourage a love of reading, nor the skills to nurture an emergent reader. The bookcases and books will provide an important component in developing a passion for reading. Educators know that there is a strong correlation between reading proficiency and later success in school and life.

AUDIO/VISUAL: Students will receive a bookcase and personal book set, Hoopoe Books Director Sally Mallam will read to the children, and JCL Reading Specialist Joan Green will conduct a training session for the parents about the importance of reading with their children at home.

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The East Palo Alto Kids Foundation (EPAK)(www.epak.org) is a community-based, volunteer organization that promotes educational opportunities and academic success for students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park.

The Jewish Coalition for Literacy(JCL) (www.jclread.org) aims to help reverse the trend of illiteracy by mobilizing volunteer reading tutors in public schools, organizing book drives, providing parent literacy instruction, and developing advocacy for public education. JCL has partnered with Beth Am to train and place reading tutors at Costañó Elementary.

Congregation Beth Am of Los Altos (www.betham.org) is a vibrant Reform Jewish community committed to meaningful worship and spiritual growth, lifelong study; and acts of gemilut chasadim (loving kindness), tzedaka (righteous giving) and tikkun olam (repairing the world). Congregation Beth Am is a partner of the Peninsula JCL and mobilizes volunteer reading tutors in Peninsula schools.

Hoopoe Books Share Literacy Program (www.shareliteracy.org) is a nation-wide program that partners with early education agencies serving poverty level and low-income families, after-school programs and organizations providing ESL and adult literacy instruction.